

## REMARKS

Claims 1-6 and 8-21 are pending. Claims 1 and 8 have been amended. Claim 7 has been cancelled. New claims 18-21 have been added. Claims 1-17 of the above-identified application were allowed by a Notice of Allowance dated March 10, 2003, and the issue fee was paid on March 21, 2003. On July 3, 2003, applicant filed (a) a Petition for Withdrawal from Issuance, (b) a Request for Continued Examination ("RCE"), and (c) an Information Disclosure Statement ("IDS") with one reference (U.S. Patent Application No. 5,835,462) for the above-referenced application. Applicants have enclosed copies of these documents as Exhibits A-C, respectively, for the Examiner's convenience. On July 3, 2003, the Petition for Withdrawal was granted, as indicated on the Notice attached as Exhibit D.

Prior to examination of the above-identified application, please enter this preliminary amendment. No new matter has been added. Applicant also encloses an Information Disclosure Statement and two additional references, U.S. Patent Nos. 5,502,702 and 4,807,209, for the Examiner's consideration. The IDS and additional references are attached as Exhibit E. Applicant respectfully requests an action on the merits.

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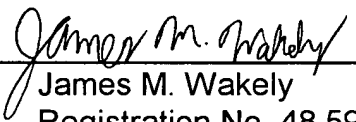
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Applicant requests an action on the merits. If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call either of the undersigned attorneys at the Los Angeles telephone number (213) 488-7100 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance should the Examiner believe that such a telephone conference would advance prosecution of the application.

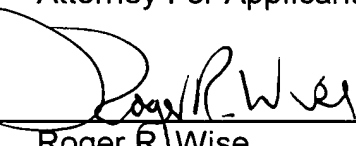
Respectfully submitted,

PILLSBURY WINTHROP LLP

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